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Military

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STRATEGIC INTELLIGENCE FOR AMERICAN WORLD POLICY. By Sherman Kent. 220 pp. Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press. \$3.

By WILLIAM H. JACKSON

IN "Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy" Sherman Kent, Professor of History at Yale University and a wartime intelligence director in the OSS, brings a thorough scholarship and practical experience to the consideration of a subject of primary importance to those charged with the responsibility for the foreign policy and security of this country and of vital concern to the rest of us who would suffer the awful consequences of their failure.

Providing policy makers and military planners with the best strategic intelligence that efficient organization and highly qualified personnel can produce is a major problem in this country. It is a problem to which the United States Government has never, in time of peace or war, devoted its full attention or brought its best organizing ability or resigned its top personnel.

Sherman Kent steps up boldly to this problem with all its baffling difficulties and politely but firmly treads on the toes which happen to be in his way. He knows his stuff and writes it down with persuasion and force. The result is the best general book so far on any aspect of intelligence. It is readable and truly informative to a layman and should bring a proper humility to many an intelligence expert who, because he knows a thing or two about intelligence, thinks he knows it all.

The chapters under the heading "Intelligence Is Knowledge" should be of particular interest to general readers and will provide for most of them the first clear statement of the nature and scope of strategic intelligence. These chapters describe the three main elements: basic intelligence or the groundwork of knowledge of a foreign country which gives meaning to day-to-day change and the groundwork without which estimates of its capabilities and intentions are likely to be meaningless; the current reportorial element; and lastly, the speculative, evaluative element which is usually expressed in the form of intelligence estimates. An intelligence estimate seeks to answer objectively and, if need be, tentatively the ultimate question of what a foreign country can do and is likely to do in given circumstances and it should be written in the light of intimate knowledge of our own policies, plans and military capabilities.

THESE chapters are, however, more than merely informative. In lucid description of the nature of strategic intelligence the author underlines on every page its vital importance in the formulation of foreign policy and in the preparation of military plans for the defense of the country.

The chapters on "Intelligence Is Organization" are of greatest immediate importance. The State is now in the throes

of organization of intelligence. The National Security Act of 1947 established a Central Intelligence Agency as an independent agency under the direction of the National Security Council. The Central Intelligence Agency is charged with three major duties:

1. The coordination of such intelligence activities of the departments and agencies of the Government as relate to the national security.

2. The correlation and evaluation of intelligence relating to the national security.

3. The performance of intelligence services of common concern which the National Security Council holds can be more efficiently accomplished centrally.

The framers of this legislation wisely sought to avoid, on the one hand, a central organization which would supersede the departmental intelligence agencies and, on the other, the chaos which has resulted and will always result from independent and uncoordinated activities in the various departments.

DR. KENT criticizes the statute for not giving the Central Intelligence Agency more power, particularly in regard to the inspection of departmental intelligence agencies, in order to assure its success in coordinating their activities. It would be foolish, for example, if the Army, Navy, Air Force and State Departments all made studies of the transportation system of a foreign country. This work might properly be divided among them or assigned to a single department or performed centrally by the CIA for the benefit of them all. The CIA does not have the power to compel such an allocation and can only make recommendations to the National Security Council. It is argued by Dr. Kent that, without greater powers of inspection, recommendations of this kind may not be made in time or with sufficient factual support to be accepted by the NSC.

He may be right but it seems probable that the CIA with its present authority can achieve coordination of intelligence activities if its leadership is bold enough to try. If the attempt is

made and fails, there should then be sufficient Congressional support for an amendment of the statute giving CIA additional power.

Sherman Kent.

A PERSUASIVE argument is made by Dr. Kent that the Director of Central Intelligence should be a civilian. The argument would appear convincing at least to the point of a requirement that an officer in the military establishment must resign his commission or retire before accepting the directorship. However, the more important point to emphasize is that the Director of Central Intelligence holds one of the three or four most important offices in the United States Government. Perhaps Dr. Kent's greatest contribution is that his book must lead any reader to recognize the critical importance of strategic intelligence and the tremendous responsibility in the hands of the Director of Central Intelligence.

The chapters on "Intelligence Is Activity" may be criticized for elaborate descriptions of methodology which is not unique to the processes of intelligence but is generally applicable to the accumulation and testing of data in other fields of the social sciences. The chapters will be enlightening, however, both to the slaves of military forms and to the intuitive prophets of foreign developments who should receive at least an inkling of the applicability of the disciplines

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of scholarship and science to the processes of intelligence work.

"Strategic Intelligence for American World Policy" is an uneven book. In some chapters the author surveys his subject as if from a great height with a very long perspective. In other chapters he seems to be peering through a microscope at little problems which a good clerk could solve.

Many readers will discover points of disagreement. For example, Dr. Kent seems to conceive of national estimates, the end product of intelligence, as being prepared piecemeal by the various intelligence agencies with the general conclusions drawn by the Central Intelligence Agency. Others may believe it essential that coordinated intelligence opinion, whether expressed as "crisis" estimates or long-term estimates of foreign capabilities and intentions, must in the final form be the result of a joint effort and must be signed by the chiefs of the various departmental intelligence agencies acting under the direction and supervision of the CIA.

Such points of difference need not detract from the merit of a very remarkable book. This book should be read by all high officials charged with responsibility for the security of the country and by all those who work in the field of intelligence. Having read the book, the general reader will surely be aware of the scope and importance of strategic intelligence, the organizational difficulties involved in the coordination of intelligence activities and opinion, and the complexity of intelligence processes. Therefore, if he keeps his eyes and ears open he can probably make a shrewd guess as to whether or not his Government is making the serious effort required to produce reliable strategic intelligence.

Mr. Jackson served as an intelligence officer in the last war. In 1944, as a colonel, he was Deputy G-2 on General Bradley's staff in Europe.

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